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Security Council

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Letter dated 9 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to forward a copy of a letter received today, 9 June 2000, from Isaias Afwerki, President of the State of Eritrea, addressed to the Secretary-General (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Haile **Menkerios**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 9 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Asmara, 9 June 2000

The invasion perpetrated by Ethiopia against Eritrea continues unabated in violation of international law and international justice.

After Ethiopia launched its naked invasion against Eritrea on 12 May, Eritrea agreed to redeploy, unilaterally and as a gesture of goodwill, from a place referred to as "Zalanbessa" in response to the appeal of the OAU current Chairman and in order to create a conducive climate to the proximity talks. This redeployment was carried out on 25 May in good faith. Ethiopia abused Eritrea's gesture of goodwill and penetrated 15 km inside Eritrean sovereign territory in that part of the country.

This violation notwithstanding, we were asked by the OAU to redeploy from additional places referred to as "Bada" and "Burrie". We pledged to do so in the interest of peace and we implemented the redeployment in good faith. (Details of the places are illustrated in attached maps.)

While the proximity talks are in session, Ethiopia's naked invasion against Eritrea continues without cessation. Ethiopia has launched incessant attacks on the Assab Front for the past three days. And yesterday evening, at 10.30 p.m., Ethiopia unleashed a large-scale offensive on this front, which continues to rage today.

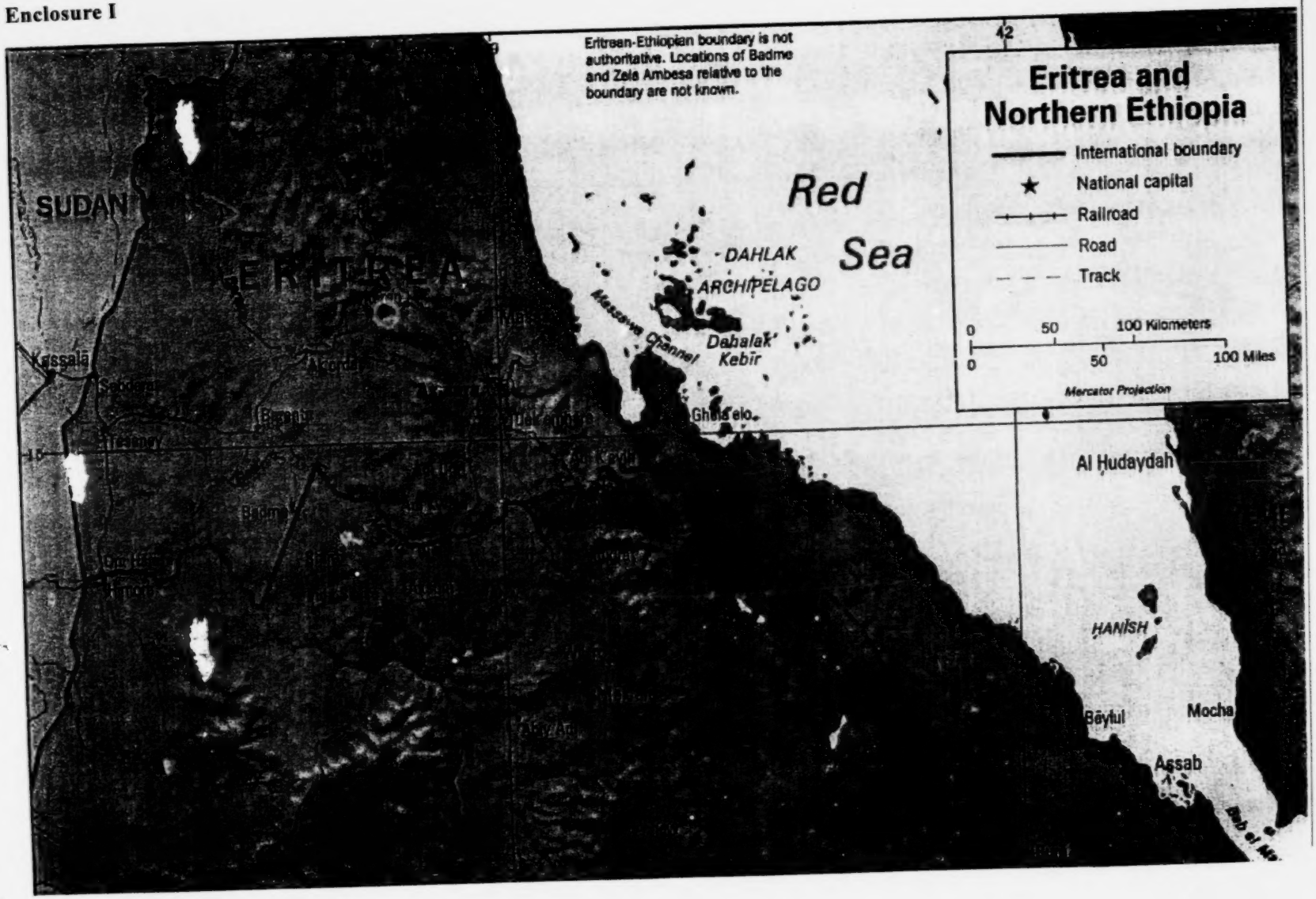
Ethiopia's offensives deep inside sovereign Eritrean territory are a flagrant act of invasion. The hollow pretexts that Ethiopia is forwarding claiming that it is "responding to Eritrean provocations" are not only untenable but have no basis in international law. Eritrea cannot possibly resort to "provocations" in its own sovereign territory. While it has an unquestionable right in exercising its right to self-defence, Eritrea cannot also engage in military activities in an area where it has redeployed voluntarily from deep into its own sovereign territory.

Eritrea remains committed to the proximity talks. This is despite the multiple preconditions and obstructions put by Ethiopia, which have no basis in international law or pure common sense.

The invasion perpetrated by Ethiopia against a sovereign Member State of the United Nations and which has caused extensive destruction, human misery and displacement cannot be tolerated with impunity. The tragic dimension of this invasion is that it is being carried out under the full observation of the international community. In the circumstances, I urge you to condemn this invasion and to stand on the side of truth and justice.

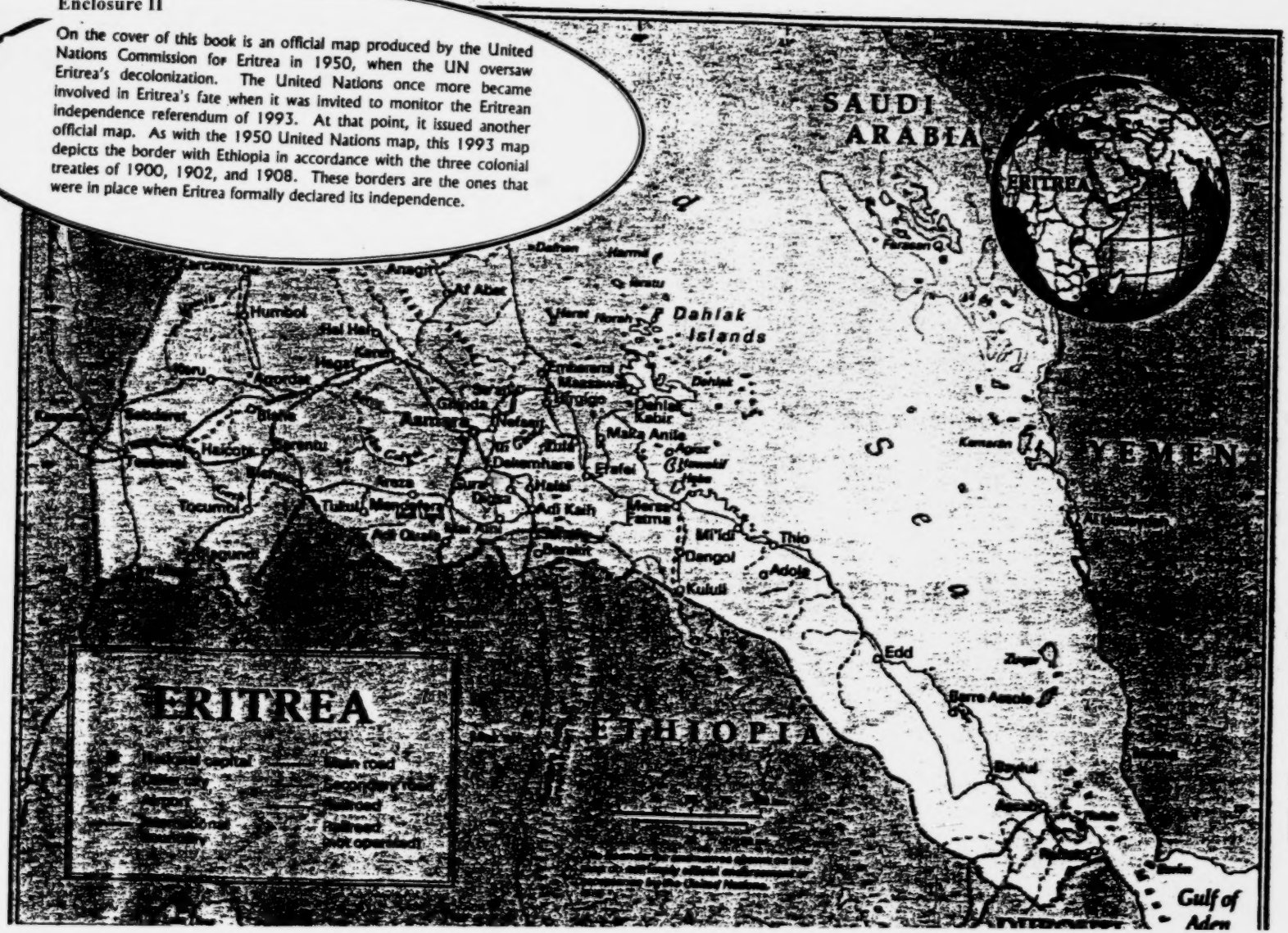
(*Signed*) Isaias **Afwerki**

Enclosure I


Eritrean-Ethiopian boundary is not authoritative. Locations of Badme and Zela Ambesa relative to the boundary are not known.
Eritrea and Northern Ethiopia
International boundary
National capital
Railroad
Road
Track
0 50 100 Kilometers
0 50 100 Miles
Mercator Projection
SUDAN
ERITREA
Red Sea
DAHLAK ARCHIPELAGO
Dahalak Kebir
Massawa Channel
Kassala
Asmara
Barentu
Tessenei
Badme
Ghinda'elo
Al Hudaydah
HANISH
Beylul
Mocha
Assab
42
15

Enclosure II

On the cover of this book is an official map produced by the United Nations Commission for Eritrea in 1950, when the UN oversaw Eritrea's decolonization. The United Nations once more became involved in Eritrea's fate when it was invited to monitor the Eritrean independence referendum of 1993. At that point, it issued another official map. As with the 1950 United Nations map, this 1993 map depicts the border with Ethiopia in accordance with the three colonial treaties of 1900, 1902, and 1908. These borders are the ones that were in place when Eritrea formally declared its independence.



S/2000/554